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*La Chançon de Willame*, an edition of the unique manuscript of the poem with vocabulary and table of proper nouns. Edited by ELIZABETH STEARNS TYLER, M. A., Ph. D. New York, Oxford University Press, 1919.

It is peculiarly fitting that attention be called to this book, because in the summer of 1918 Dr. Tyler went to France to do Red Cross work and died there last February while stationed at Sedan. That this *Chançon de Willame*, whose most distinctive feature is the picture it gives of the heroic Guibure, should have found for its first American editor a woman, and a woman also capable of heroic deeds, is a striking coincidence.

The mere making available to students of French of this "complete edition of the *Chançon de Willame*" (p. vi, n.), is no small accomplishment. But Dr. Tyler deserves more than simple praise for having done this. "If this edition of the manuscript," she says (p. xvii), "will lead to a deeper study of the poem and to a wider appreciation—and enjoyment—of its beauty, the edition will have proved its *raison d'être*." The more seriously, therefore, we examine her work, the more we shall honor her.

For Dr. Tyler the *Chançon de Willame* is not, as for Suchier, simply the first 1982 lines, but the whole of the manuscript of 3356 lines, first published in a limited edition by the Chiswick Press in 1903. Dr. Tyler has compared this first edition with a facsimile of the manuscript, and given us a revised text with modern punctuation and capitalization, and the diacritical marks usually found in critical editions. The text is also emended "to suggest by means of notes, parentheses, and italics a smooth, comprehensible reading of the poem" (p. xiv), the "normal page" still keeping before the reader the text of the manuscript. Dr. Tyler has done, therefore, much more than is promised us by the editor of *Les Classiques Français du moyen âge*, who announced in 1913 (*Rom.*, p. 473) that there would appear in the near future an edition of the *Chançon de Willame* which would put "*à la disposition de tous les travailleurs le contenu du précieux manuscrit de Chiswick.*"

In preparing her emendations, Dr. Tyler has, naturally, made use of the works of her predecessors. Her use of them has not, however, been servile, and it is much to her credit that we note from time to time a reading that appeals to us more even than

that of Suchier. We are glad to see that the first hemistich of line 485, for example: *ne vus esmaez*, has been emended to read: *n'esmaez vus*, following the suggestion of Rechnitz rather than of Suchier: *ne vus tameir*. Again in line 1636: "Sur els devom (nus) uostre maltalant turner," Dr. Tyler happily suggests *haür* for *maltalant*, recalling perhaps the words of Ganelon in the Roland: "*Rollanz sis nies me coillit en haür*." This seems decidedly preferable to Suchier's *faide*. The troublesome lines 474 to 483, inclusive, in which *a—e* and *e—e* assonances are mixed, Dr. Tyler presents as one *laisse* (LII), whereas Suchier makes two *laisse*s of them (LII and LIII). In consonance with this is Dr. Tyler's emendation of line 1832: "*E sun halberc li runt e desmaele*," to read: "*E sun halberc li desrunt e desmaillet*," even tho the twelve words in assonance with *desmaillet* all present an open *e*. Suchier emends the second hemistich: *li runt e desclavele*, recalling perhaps the line in the Coven. Vivien, 1,595: *E son hauberc desront et desclavele*. In many cases we should be glad if Dr. Tyler had added more notes explanatory of her readings, but as her primary purpose was to offer a text for those who "read for the story" (p. ix), these have been reduced to a minimum. In this particular case we can divine, as again in line 2130, where the same emendation is made under the same conditions, that Dr. Tyler believed that some irregularities might be allowed the old poet. She may have recalled that Gaston Paris in his *Extraits* of the *Chanson de Roland* leaves the word *main* in a *laisse* in *e* (l. 2264).

In line 836 I am tempted to see a purely typographical error in the note *geter*, altho the same form is again found in the Vocabulary (p. 161). Probably Suchier's suggestion *reter* was meant in both cases. It is difficult to see what *geter* added (?) to the "normal page" line would mean: *Allas, peccable, n'en puis, home gent!* whereas Suchier's emended line: *A, las, pechables, n'en puis home reter*, is at least formally correct and intelligible.

In line 254, the position of the quotation mark at the beginning of the line raises some interesting questions. Rechnitz interpreted lines 253-54:

Donc dist Tedbalz: "Qu'en löez, Viviiens,  
De la bataille? Car ore ja vient bien."

allowing an *enjambement* as he does also in lines 570-71 and 747-48. Suchier likewise admits the *enjambement*, but recognizes the second hemistich of line 254 as the answer of Vivien: "*Ai or, ja l'avrum*

*bien!*" while the reading of Rechnitz leaves Vivien's question unanswered. Dr. Tyler, on the contrary, sees no *enjambement*, but makes the whole line Vivien's answer: "De la bataille! Car ore l'avrum bien!" When so long a step has been taken toward a critical edition by punctuation, it would seem easy to go a step farther and differentiate the vowel and consonant *u* and *i*. This would certainly have contributed to the popularizing of the text.

In line 1840: *Que l'os del col li bruse e esmuille*, it is not quite clear whether Dr. Tyler adopted Suchier's emendation, *esmoület* < *esmoüler* = "das Mark herausschlagen." At any rate we might very well consider *esmuille* the equivalent of *esmulle* < *ex* + *modulare* on the analogy of *demoller* = *disloquer*, which still lives in Rabelais: *Es aultres demolloyt les reins* (I, 27, cf. Godefroy, DEMOLER); or, still more closely, on the analogy of *desmoller*, *desmouler*, of which Godefroy gives only the form "*desmolé, -ollé, -oulé, = déformé, abîmé,*" but which is still in Oudin "*au sens de déformer*" (Dict. Gen., DEMOULER). The word *mollé* = well-formed, is twice found in the *Chançon* (ll. 2226, 2750), so that it would not be far-fetched to attribute to the poet the compound *esmoller*. We could then read the hemistich with the *li* of the manuscript: *li bruiset e esmulle* (cf. Suchier: *bruiset e esmoület*). In line 1902, where Dr. Tyler follows Suchier in making *escure* the same verb as the *escure* (< *escutere*) in lines 777 and 1216, we should like to read *escure* < *escurrere*, and read *cors* = *course* as in line 2878 of the *Roland*: *Descent a piet alez i est plein cors*. The meaning would seem more appropriate, especially because of the *Le cure leïst* which follows:

"Li bers Willame vit le paien venir,  
Le cors escure, la grant hanste brandir,  
(E) il tint s'espee devant en mi le vis;  
Dunce l'en esgarde li reis de Sarazins,  
Le cure leïst, al petit pas s'est mis."

In line 2887 *estorterez* is given in the vocabulary as from *estorter*, to tease. Would it not be better to see here another example of *estordre*, of which *estortre* is a recognized variant?

"Si jo puis ja, vif ne m'estorterez."  
Od sun bastun en ad quatre tuez.

The third conjugation future with an analogical *e* is familiar in this poem (cf. ll. 200, 208, 294, etc.).

These are but a few of the remarks which the reading of Dr. Tyler's text suggests. The subject of the composition of the *Chançon* is only casually treated, as might be expected from the general principle adopted of dispensing as far as possible with the display of erudition. Various brief notes call attention to possible *lacunae* and interpolations. The nearest approach to a statement of opinion on the subject of its composition is found in the note on line 1982: "Since Weeks made the suggestion in October, 1905, scholars agree that the older part of the chanson ends here." But if Suchier and Weeks agree with Dr. Tyler upon this point, other scholars view the whole question of the composition of the manuscript quite differently. Since Paul Meyer expressed the opinion that "en réalité il n'y aucune coupure dans le récit au v. 1857 ni aux environs" (*Rom.*, 1903, p. 598), this opinion has not ceased to find champions. Among these are the authors of the two more important articles (The Composition of the *Chançon de Willame* by Hugh A. Smith, *Romanic Review*, 1913, and *La Chanson de Roland et la Chançon de Willame* by M. Wilmotte in *Romania*, 1915) that have appeared since Suchier gave us the excellent bibliography of the *Chançon de Willame* in his edition of 1911, and which we should have been glad to see brought up to date in the volume before us.

The exigencies of the Great War may have prevented Dr. Tyler from providing her text with a fuller vocabulary. If the edition was designed especially for students outside the sphere of Old French, for folk-lorists, for historians seeking a picture of the Middle Ages, for "literary amateurs seeking beautiful poetry, wherever it may be found" (p. ix), as well as for students of Old French who "know probably the vocabulary of a text like Gaston Paris' *Extraits de la Chanson de Roland*" (p. xv), a more complete glossary would seem highly desirable. It might well be undertaken in memory of Dr. Tyler.

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